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No. 763

MORAL EDUCATION

REPORT

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON MORAL EDUCATION

OF THE

HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS'
ASSOCIATION OF THE
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

PRESENTED BY MR. GALLINGER

JUNE 5, 1912.—Ordered to be printed

WASHINGTON
1912

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OF
JUL 15

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REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON MORAL EDUCATION OF THE HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA.

The committee on education, working as two subcommittees, continued the study of moral education with Miss Bucknam as chairman, and vocational training under the direction of Miss Throckmorten.

The committee under Miss Bucknam, following the recommendations of last year's committee on education, investigated the feasibility of direct moral instruction.

The subject was found to involve the following problems:

1. The right teacher.
2. Whether or not a textbook should be used.
3. What textbooks are available and of value.
4. How best to adjust the work in our present curriculums.

Our deduction is that it is no longer a question as to whether you or I believe in direct moral instruction; it is only a question as to how long before the schools in Washington will follow the trend of national and international thought on this subject. The forces at work in this direction are as powerful as were the forces that brought manual training into the schools 20 years ago.

The report of the National Education Association for 1911 says, "Moral education is rapidly finding a place in the course of study of the most progressive public schools."

The further work of the committee was to investigate the following formal courses of study; those prepared by the National Education Association; by a commission of Michigan State teachers; by Prof. Sharp, of Wisconsin University; and the courses of the Ethical School of New York.

The committee agree that the following principles are fundamental in any treatment of the subject.

1. Since morality relates to the conduct of the individual in society, work in the field of moral education must utilize the social instinct in developing motives of right conduct. Such procedure will work against self-seeking, which is at the bottom of most wrongdoing, and will put emphasis upon the idea of service.

2. Education in morals should be constructive of right ideals, attitudes, and habits.

3. There are two distinct phases of the subject of moral education—training and instruction. Of these the former is the more important.

4. While the school may not teach religion or religious truth, it can at least assume their existence, and in all its instruction maintain respect for the same.

5. There must be no mistaking or underestimating the moral purpose of the schools as a socializing agency, or the personality of the teacher as a molding influence in the lives of the pupils. The

question of the teacher's personality is the all-absorbing topic of every work on moral education.

Some of the problems are—

1. How to make the personality of the teacher more effective.
2. How to convince teachers of the importance of their influence.
3. How to make moral qualifications more prominent in the selection and retention of teachers.

The committee has made two collections which it urges the members of the association to borrow and read. The first of these is of exceptional inspirational value, as it deals with the tributes to great teachers of our own time. The second contains references from current literature concerning the value of the teacher's personality. These in every case testify to the fact that not profound scholarship but breadth of sympathy and intelligent insight are qualities of the ideal teacher. The great movement to-day in public affairs is not fundamentally political, nor even fundamentally economical; it is fundamentally moral, and in a very true sense it is fundamentally religious. This, a quotation from a current magazine article, we consider a warrant for our interest in moral education.

The subject of vocational training is closely allied to that of moral education. Vocational guidance, a development of the past five years, means directing the attention of the vast army of young people to the possibilities of the various vocations. This work is developing along many lines, but all are based on the fundamental idea of preventing waste of time and life by helping workers to choose early the right occupation.

The social significance of this movement is beginning to be appreciated in all parts of the United States, but active work is as yet, with a few exceptions, limited to the larger cities—New York, Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and St. Louis.

The subject has received more attention in Boston than anywhere else, to judge by the number of organizations that carry on the work, and the practical value of that work.

Vocational guidance work in New York City has centered in the activities of the High-School Teachers' Association. The association has for many years maintained a student's aid committee which has been of service in securing information about vocations, directing students into proper channels, and publishing information about vocations. The work has been supported by donations from the High-School Teachers' Association and has been carried on outside of regular school duties.

The subject of greatest interest to the promoters and teachers of vocational education at the present time is the Page bill, which has been introduced during this Congress. The bill calls for an appropriation of $5,000,000 for instruction in trades, industries, and home economics.

Harvard has already established a course in vocational training, and De Vincent, of Minnesota, has in preparation plans for the extension of this work throughout the university course. Meanwhile business interests in the cities are cooperating to advance what they deem a time saver, a bridge between school work and life work.

This year in our own school system two of these vocational schools have been established—one for white and one for colored pupils.

The promoters of this interest in our schools are most enthusiastic and expect rapid increase in the number and accommodations of schools.

This is only a brief view of the many interesting problems that are being attempted now in our country. In Europe, especially in Germany, the work has reached much larger proportions.

Moral education and vocational training are but two phases of the same subject, since it is agreed that to teach the pupils how to fit themselves in body, mind, and soul to fill the place that may be theirs in the service of men is to teach the best sort of ethics.

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